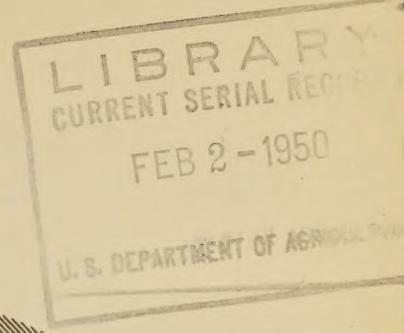


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# CO-OP ELECTRIFICATION ADVISER TRAINING OUTLINE

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VALUE OF  
CO-OP MEMBERSHIP

REA

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION ADMINISTRATION

U. S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

# PURPOSES OF THIS OUTLINE

This is one of a series of outlines prepared by REA as an aid in planning and arranging training schools for co-op electrification advisers. Each outline deals with a power use subject or with some aspect of cooperative principles and practice or with a particular method or technique of getting information to people. These are the three principal fields in which electrification advisers need to be skilled. Each booklet contains both suggested subject matter and suggestions as to how the material might be presented, with an indication of a suitable time schedule. The booklet is

thus useful as a guide to committees in charge of training schools, as an aid to the instructors, and as a subject matter manual that may be distributed to participants at the close of a training session for study and future reference. Subjects available or in preparation are listed below by title and number. It is suggested that committees planning such training schools keep in mind the need of training in all three types of subject matter and, insofar as practicable, make use of the outlines in a balanced combination.

## LIST OF SUBJECTS

An ORIENTATION OUTLINE (unnumbered) covers all three fields of information. It is to provide the subject matter for an initial school that will give co-op officials basic background information and an understanding of the nature and scope of the educational job to be done.

NO.	POWER USE SUBJECT	NO.	CO-OP SUBJECT	NO.	METHOD OR TECHNIQUE
1	Farm and home Wiring	100	Value of Co-op Membership	200	Getting News to Members (Newsletters and State Paper Columns)
2	Farm Motors	101	Integrating Power Use and Co-op Education	201	using the Radio
3	Water Systems and Plumbing	102	The REA Program and Co-ops	202	Co-op Reports and Non-periodical Publications
4	Electric Ranges	103	The Electric Co-op — What It Is	203	Making Effective Talks
5	Laundry Equipment	104	The Co-op Movement — Here and Abroad	204	Demonstration Techniques
6	Poultry Production	105	Co-op Bylaws	205	Methods and Results of Adult Education
7	Refrigerators, Home Freezers, Walk-ins	106	Establishing Member Ownership	206	Effective Meetings
8	Small Appliances	107	Assuring Member Participation	207	Photography and Motion Pictures
9	Dairying	108	Co-op Tax Status	208	Working with Newspapers
10	Pig Brooding	109	Annual Meetings	209	Exhibits and displays
11	Farm, Home and School Lighting	110	Co-op's Place in the Community	210	Working with Rural Youth
12	Farm Shop	111	Cooperation Between Co-ops	211	Working with Community Organizations
13	Pump Irrigation				
14	Garden Watering				
15	Electric Hotbeds				
16	Elevating, cleaning and grading farm crops				
17	Drying grain, hay, peanuts, etc				
18	Heating, cooling, ventilating				
19	Cleaners, dish washers				
20	Kitchen planning				

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Rural Electrification Administration  
Washington 25, D. C.

Suggested Program and Procedure

UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF CO-OP MEMBERSHIP

The greatest potential strength of a co-op is in its membership. But the only way to make sure of wholehearted member support is to make sure that the members fully know and appreciate the co-op's value to them. To build up such member understanding is primarily the electrification adviser's job. In order to do so effectively, he needs to know the facts himself and how they can best be brought to the members' attention.

Suggested Procedure. The following outline shows how this subject might be presented in a one-day program at a co-op electrification adviser training school. The topics would be developed largely through group discussion after brief presentations by persons expert in the various subjects. The outline suggests several devices for stimulating discussion.

Discussion Leader. The day's discussion leader is important to the successful development of this subject. He should be generally familiar not only with co-ops but also with the REA program. He should have had experience in stimulating and guiding group discussion. A cooperative specialist of a college faculty or from the Extension Service or an experienced farm co-op official might make a good leader. Someone in the Statewide organization who has shown special interest in member education is another good possibility. If you cannot locate a suitable person in your State or region, REA may be able to furnish someone to serve as leader.

Program Chairman. No doubt you will have someone to serve as general chairman for your entire conference. This person -- or someone selected to serve only for this particular day's program -- will be of great help to the discussion leader, particularly if he is an old-timer in the cooperative electrification movement.

Subject Matter Outline. Although the subject matter should be developed largely by the group, it is desirable for the leader, as well as the program speakers, to have a prepared subject matter outline as a guide, so as to make sure that no major points are overlooked in the discussion. Such an outline to supplement this program outline is in preparation. Extra copies for all participants to take home for reference and further study can be supplied by REA. In general, it will probably be found that the participants do more thinking of their own, contribute more to the discussion, and get more out of the meeting if that detailed subject matter outline is distributed to them at the end rather than at the beginning of the meeting.

Suggested Program and Procedure (Cont.)

UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF CO-OP MEMBERSHIP

Morning Session

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Speaker or Leader</u>
9:00	<u>Opening Remarks</u> Statement of purpose of session and introduction of participants.	Chairman (see preceding page for suggestions)
9:15	<u>Panel Discussion:</u> "How Member and Community Understanding of Co-op Benefits Helps the Co-op" Conducted by . . . . . Discussion leader for the day (see preceding page for sug- gestions on selection)	
Suggested 10-minute topics for panel members:		
(a) "Why I, as a Director, Believe It Is Essential for Members to Know the Value of Their Co-op . . . . . Experienced co-op director		
(b) "Active Participation in Co-op Affairs by Well-Informed Members Makes the Manager's Job Easier" . . . . . Experienced co-op manager		
(c) "What the Co-op Has to Gain From Good Community Standing" . . . . . Civic leader, minister, journalist or educator; co-op director (not necessarily from an electric co-op); Statewide manager or editor		
Follow with half-hour of questions and group discussion, led by Discussion Leader.		
10:15	Recess.	
10:30	<u>Work Session:</u> "How Members and the Community Are Benefited by the Co-op" Conducted by . . . . . Discussion leader (see above)	
An effective way of handling this topic is to divide the group into four smaller groups. Assign to each group one of the following sub-topics:		

Suggested Program and Procedure (Cont.)

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Speaker or Leader</u>
	(a) Co-op benefits to the farmer. (b) Co-op benefits to the farm homemaker. (c) Co-op benefits to rural youth. (d) Co-op benefits to the community.	
	Meeting simultaneously for approximately a half hour in different sections of the room or in different rooms, each group chooses a chairman and a reporter and proceeds to develop as many points as the time permits. The reporter writes down the points as they are developed and agreed upon.	
	At the end of a half-hour, the full group reassembles to hear the reports of the smaller groups. After each report, the points made are discussed by the entire group, with the result that some may be dropped or changed and new ones may be added. Listing the points on a blackboard makes for better discussion. The conference secretary should make sure that a permanent copy is made of each final list before it is erased, so that a complete reminder list can later be mailed to all participants.	
12:00	Recess for lunch.	

Afternoon Session

1:30	Summary of morning session. A review of the discussion to date will help set the stage for the afternoon program.	Chairman
1:45	<u>Panel discussion:</u> "Who Shares Responsibility of Building Member Understanding"  Suggested 5-minute talks by panel members:  (a) "How the Board Can Help in Building Member Understanding" . . . . . (b) "How the Manager Can Help in Building Member Understanding" . . . . .	Co-op director Co-op manager

Suggested Program and Procedure (Cont.)

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Speaker or Leader</u>
	(c) "How the Co-op Staff Can Help in Building Member Understanding	Co-op office manager, cashier, bookkeeper, wiring inspector, foreman or lineman
	(d) "How the Electrification Adviser Can Help in Building Member Understanding" . . . . .	Co-op electrification adviser
	Follow with a short period of questions and discussion, conducted by leader.	
2:10	Introduction of series of talks on general topic: "Making Members Aware of Co-op Benefits" . . . . .	Chairman
2:15	<u>Talk:</u> "Cooperation Must Be Demonstrated -- What Management and Staff Can Do" . . . . .	Director, a cooperative specialist, or co-op leader, in or out of rural electric field.
	Discussion.	
2:45	<u>Talk:</u> "Co-op Benefits Must Be Told -- Ways in Which to Tell Them"	Co-op journalist, co-op education specialist, or public relations specialist.
	Discussion.	
3:15	<u>Talk:</u> "Power Use Information Increases Co-op Value to Members" . . . . .	Power use specialist; chairman of power use committee.
	Discussion.	
3:45	Intermission.	
4:00	<u>Talk:</u> "Cooperation Precedes Energization -- Reaching New Members While They're New" . . . . .	Manager or director experienced in good work along this line, co-op leader or Statewide editor.
4:30	<u>Work Project:</u> "Information Packet for New Members."	Discussion leader.
	Have group make up a list of informational material for a packet which a co-op might give to every new member. When list is agreed upon select from it those items which would have to be prepared especially.	

Suggested Program and Procedure (Cont.)

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Speaker or Leader</u>
	<p>It is desirable to have a table display of the available material, REA material and whatever else is available from local sources.</p> <p>Divide the group into sub-groups and assign to each sub-group the task of preparing a particular item or at least a detailed outline for it. If time permits, have each sub-group present its work to entire group for comments and discussion. Save copies of work for later mailing to all participants.</p>	
5:15	<u>Summary and Conclusion</u>	Chairman

Review the results of the day's discussion and distribute copies of the detailed subject matter outline, with suggestions on how it may be used.

Evening Session

- Following Dinner      Showing of Co-op Movies:  
or  
Later in Evening      "Here is Tomorrow" -- 30 minutes. Broadly educational film on general co-op program. Available from Cooperative League of USA, 343 South Dearborn St., Chicago 4, Ill.
- "The Goolibah Tree" -- 20 minutes. Co-op principles shown simply in color cartoon, puppet show. Also available from Cooperative League.
- "The Rural Co-op" -- 30 minutes. General story of farm co-ops in United States. Available from Information Agent of the Farm Credit Administration District which serves your State.
- In case one of the listed films is not available, another co-op film could be substituted.

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END OF PROGRAM. SUGGESTED SUBJECT MATTER FOLLOWS.

## Suggested Subject Matter

### UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF CO-OP MEMBERSHIP

The following specific subject matter suggestions are intended as a check list to aid chairman, discussion leaders and speakers in preparing their material for the program as outlined on the preceding pages.

#### Topic I. How the Co-op is Benefited by Member and Community Understanding.

To become truly successful, a co-op must stack up on these three scores:

As a democratic organization;

As an efficiently operated business;

As a recognized community asset.

Talks and discussion should bring out why and in what ways the co-op is benefited in these respects if members understand the value of their co-op membership and if community groups are properly informed about the co-op.

##### A. Gains to the co-op as an organization (director's viewpoint)

A member who understands the value of the co-op to himself and his family, will:

1. Be interested in learning more

(a.) about his co-op,

(b.) about co-op principles and practices,

(c.) about the co-op movement.

Experience has shown that uninformed members can easily wreck a co-op. They are a serious liability. But informed members are the best health insurance for a co-op.

2. Be eager to carry out his member responsibilities by

(a.) coming to meetings,

(b.) making his vote count,

(c.) complying with the bylaws and other rules,

(d.) helping defend the co-op against unfair attacks and unfounded rumors.

Suggested Subject Matter (Cont.)

Apathetic members will do nothing, will make it hard for the co-op to function by not coming to meetings, will disregard rules made for the good of the co-op, will be unfairly critical of the board and of the directors' devotion and good intentions, will not stand by the co-op in times of crisis, and will believe and often initiate and spread all sorts of unfounded rumors and untruths which harms the co-op. Apathetic members cause a co-op to fall apart while active members give it strength and make it grow.

B. Gains to the co-op as a business (manager's viewpoint)

Informed and active members will:

1. Make management's job easier by

- (a.) willingly complying with reasonable operating rules,
- (b.) cooperating in preventive maintenance,
- (c.) encouraging other members to cooperate,
- (d.) helping to secure easements and new members,
- (e.) reporting trouble promptly,
- (f.) paying bills promptly,
- (g.) being careful with co-op property.

2. Build financial success for co-op by

- (a.) helping keep operating costs down,
- (b.) making efficient use of power,
- (c.) helping neighbors learn to use power efficiently.

C. Gains to co-op from community recognition (civic leader's viewpoint)

When the co-op is well thought of by community leaders and groups, it means that:

- 1. The propaganda put out by co-op enemies will find little response and support in the community.
- 2. The merchants on Main Street will work with instead of against the co-op.

### Suggested Subject Matter (Cont.)

3. Local public agencies can be counted on to be friendly and helpful.
4. The educators will cooperate in co-op educational efforts, particularly among youth groups.
5. The local press and radio will boost instead of knock the co-op.
6. The friendly atmosphere will make the co-op employees take pride in working for the co-op.
7. The co-op directors and manager will be respected as civic leaders who are benefiting the community.
8. The co-op will get better cooperation from its own members because they will feel privileged to be joint owners of an enterprise highly regarded in the community.

On the other hand, if a co-op fails to gain the goodwill of the community, the co-op officials and employees will be regarded with suspicion and perhaps even open enmity. The merchants and community leaders will easily be influenced by false rumors spread to hurt the co-op. And the co-op members are likely to lose confidence in the co-op leadership and to feel apologetic rather than proud of their co-op membership. The net effect of all this will be to disrupt and weaken the co-op and to keep it from becoming the progressive community force it should rightfully be.

### Topic II. How Members and the Community are Benefited by the Co-op.

To gain the goodwill of the community and the active support and cooperation of its own members, a co-op must first convince its members and the community that the co-op is of value to them. People cannot be expected to support or defend something which they don't consider to be of some benefit to themselves. Therefore, it is important for co-op leaders and educators to know and be able to explain these benefits.

#### A. Co-op benefits to the farmer

As member of an electric co-op which serves him, a farmer benefits by:

1. Having electric power to aid him, which he probably would not have got if the co-op had not been organized.
2. Getting this electric power service without a large cash down payment.

Suggested Subject Matter (Cont.)

3. Getting electricity at lower rates than he would have to pay if the co-op had not come into existence, provided he could have got it at all in that case.
4. Being able to get reliable advice from his co-op on good wiring, efficient power use, and the selection and care of electric equipment. There is a vital difference between power use education as practiced by a co-op that has its members' interest at heart and "load building" as practiced by so many other power suppliers.
5. Being a partner in the co-op business, with all of the rights and privileges of ownership.
6. Being a co-owner of one of the biggest businesses in the community.
7. Being assured of non-profit service, or service-at-cost, by having his overpayments credited back to him as patronage refunds or patronage capital. This enables him to build up a personal equity in the net worth of the co-op.
8. Having an equal vote with every other member in the control of the co-op.
9. Knowing that the co-op board and staff work for his benefit as user.
10. Demonstrating that everybody gains when people work together, and that through a co-op the farmers can do many things which each one could not do by himself alone.
11. Providing a better standard of living for his family.
12. Helping to build a better rural community, with better community facilities which electricity makes possible.

B. Co-op benefits to the farm homemaker

Mrs. Farmer, as a partner in the farming enterprise, enjoys essentially the same benefits from the co-op as the farmer himself, especially if she holds a joint membership with her husband. As a joint member, she has a vote jointly with her husband, and she can even be elected to the board of directors. But in addition, the electric co-op offers benefits of tremendous importance to the farm homemaker, such as:

1. Relief from the drudgery of
  - (a.) washing by hand,
  - (b.) ironing with the sad iron,
  - (c.) pumping and hauling water,
  - (d.) cooking over a hot stove in summer.

Suggested Subject Matter (Cont.)

2. More leisure time for

- (a.) reading in light which won't tire the eyes nor spoil eyesight,
- (b.) resting from farm and home chores,
- (c.) listening to the radio,
- (d.) visiting with neighbors and going to town, and
- (e.) taking part in neighborhood and community activities, like PTA's, home demonstration clubs, co-op meetings, etc.

3. Better family health through

- (a.) food refrigeration,
- (b.) better lighting, which saves eyesight and prevents accidents,
- (c.) plenty of running water for cleanliness.

C. Co-op benefits to rural youth.

The children of electric co-op members will benefit greatly, of course, from the better standard of living which co-op electricity has made possible for the farm family. But in addition, rural youth will gain other immediate and long-range benefits, such as:

- 1. More leisure time for study and play, since kilowatts will help with the farm chores.
- 2. Better educational facilities made possible by rural school electrification, better light for home study.
- 3. Opportunities for practical training in basic electricity and in use of (and even making of) electric appliances and equipment.
- 4. Opportunity to learn about co-op principles and what co-ops mean to the farmer. The farm youth of today are the farmers of tomorrow. The future of electric and other co-ops will be in their hands.
- 5. Finding farm living more desirable, attractive and satisfying because of less drudgery, more conveniences and greater cash income possibilities on the electrified farm.
- 6. More work opportunities in rural areas because low-cost electricity stimulates the development of rural industries.

D. Co-op benefits to the community.

If the co-op is well managed and the co-op leadership has demonstrated a sense of civic responsibility, then the business and civic community groups and leaders can readily be made aware of the benefits which the community gains by reason of the co-op's existence and successful development, such as:

1. Rural electrification of the entire surrounding area, raising the living standards of all families in the area. The cream-skimming practices common before the co-ops got going were not for the welfare of all.
2. Electric power on the farm means higher farm income, which in turn means more business for the merchants, not only in electric appliances but in everything which farm families will buy if they have the money.
3. A new private business enterprise in the community, with an investment of a million dollars or more, and a sizable payroll which means more business for the merchants.
4. Ownership and control of the co-op utility system in the hands of local people who are a part of the community. This assures that all benefits will accrue to the people in the community.
5. A more prosperous farm population means more tax revenue for local taxing bodies for improvement of community facilities.
6. The network of rural co-op lines stimulates development of rural industries which brings more money and more people into the community and thereby lessens the burden of local taxes on each individual citizen.
7. Farm electrification the co-op way, on an area-wide basis, helps to reverse the alarming trend of migration away from rural areas. In the past, the rural community lost many of its most enterprising and valuable young people because it had nothing to offer them except drudgery and comfortless living. When the population in an area shrinks, the towns and the merchants in the area suffer. Electric co-ops are community builders and therefore help the rural towns and merchants.
8. Townspeople who have had electricity as long as they can remember need to be helped to understand what life on an unelectrified farm meant to the farm family. And they should be made to realize that most of the electrified farms in the surrounding area would probably still be without electricity today if the farmers had not formed a co-op to do the job themselves.

## Suggested Subject Matter (Cont.)

### Topic III. Who Shares Responsibility of Building Member Understanding.

Helping members understand the value of co-op membership is definitely not a one-man job. Everyone who is officially connected with the co-op shares in that responsibility because such understanding is a fundamental necessity to the co-op's permanent success. But to avoid confusion it is important to know how this responsibility is distributed among the various people.

#### A. The board's responsibility in building member understanding.

The board is made up of people, the trustees or directors. Board actions depend on what they know, think and do as individuals. This means that the directors themselves must be convinced of the importance of getting the members to understand the value of co-op membership if a real member information job is to be done.

It is up to the board to initiate and authorize a member education program. But such board action alone is not enough. No co-op activity can succeed unless the board backs it 100 percent. The board is the governing body which decides policies, plans and programs, tells the manager what it wants done, and checks on how well it is being done. Therefore, the active interest of the board is essential to the success of a member education program.

#### B. The manager's responsibility in building member understanding.

As the co-op's paid executive, the manager advises the board on policies and plans, and he is responsible for the effective carrying out of plans and programs approved by the board. It is therefore up to him to help the board realize the importance of building an informed membership and to suggest ways and means for doing the job. When given authority to go ahead, he has the responsibility for seeing to it that the job gets done and that everyone on his staff does his share in getting it done.

#### C. The co-op staff's responsibility in building member understanding.

Every co-op employee, regardless of his particular duties, has contacts with co-op members and with people in the community. He can help or hurt the co-op, depending on what he knows and says about it. It is therefore his responsibility as a co-op employee to learn to understand what a co-op is and what membership in the co-op means. The better informed he is about his co-op and its value to the members, the more he can help, in his personal contacts, in building member understanding.

## Suggested Subject Matter (Cont.)

### D. The electrification adviser's responsibility in building member understanding.

The major burden of any member information and education program naturally rests on the electrification adviser employed particularly for that purpose. He (or she) must make and carry out detailed plans as approved by the manager and authorized by the board.

Therefore, in addition to acquiring correct subject matter knowledge on power use, the electrification adviser must become thoroughly familiar with co-op philosophy and principles, with the REA program, with the co-op's own history, and with the many ways in which members can benefit from their co-op. He also needs to become familiar with the various methods and techniques that can be used for getting information to co-op members and to the community.

It is a part of his responsibility to assist the manager in getting the co-op staff properly informed and in enlisting the help of the directors and of the staff in building member and community understanding.

The electrification adviser needs to realize that the first step for developing member interest and support is to make the members aware of the value of their co-op membership. Unless and until they understand that, they are not likely to show much active interest in co-op affairs and in the welfare of the co-op.

### Topic IV. Making Members Aware of Co-op Benefits.

Preceding topics dealt with (1.) why such awareness is important to the co-op, (2.) what these benefits are, and (3.) who shares in the responsibility of getting the members informed. The problem now is how to get the job done.

The "Educational Handbook" issued by REA was prepared for the specific purpose of enabling electrification advisers to develop and carry out a well-rounded information and education program. The suggestions in the handbook will, of course, have to be considered in the light of particular local needs and conditions.

To stimulate thinking and discussion among the group participants, this topic can be opened up by a few brief talks by persons familiar with different aspects of the problem, as indicated in the program outline preceding this subject matter outline. In general, the discussion will be likely to prove most fruitful if it takes up matters as those listed below.

## Suggested Subject Matter (Cont.)

- A. How efficient management can help members to realize the value of their co-op membership.
- B. How the practice of real democracy by the board enhances the value of co-op membership.
- C. The importance of making power use activities the occasion for also giving information about the co-op and its value to the members and community.
- D. Good occasions for telling the co-op story, such as:
  - 1. Annual meetings.
  - 2. Wiring and other power use meetings for new and prospective members.
  - 3. Neighborhood and community meetings of various organizations.
  - 4. County fairs.
  - 5. Meetings of youth groups, and classroom discussions.
  - 6. Individual contacts with prospective and new members.
  - 7. Contacts with dealers and contractors.
- E. Ways of making members aware of co-op benefits.
  - 1. Talks and discussions.
  - 2. Newsletter or column in state paper.
  - 3. Special co-op publications, such as
    - (a.) Annual report,
    - (b.) Co-op bylaws,
    - (c.) History of the co-op,
    - (d.) Question and answer booklet about co-op.
  - 4. Use of the local press.
  - 5. Use of local radio.
  - 6. Visual aids, such as
    - (a.) Posters and window displays,
    - (b.) Pictures in co-op publications,
    - (c.) Film slides to illustrate talks,
    - (d.) Motion pictures,
    - (e.) Displays at county fairs.

## Topic V. Planning an Information Packet for New Members.

This is a work project for the entire group. Suggestions for handling this part of the meeting are given in the program outline. If sample packets in use by some co-ops can be obtained and displayed, these could also be evaluated and discussed by members of the group. The chairman, discussion

### Suggested Subject Matter (Cont.)

leader, or conference secretary should make sure that the results of this work project are preserved and are made available to all participants and to other co-ops which might be interested.

#### Topic VI. Making Further Use of this Outline.

- A. It is hoped that electrification advisers will find this subject matter outline valuable as a reference for occasional review to aid them in the preparation of talks, articles, and visual material.
- B. Parts of the outline can also be used effectively for group discussions at board and staff meetings and at co-op community and neighborhood meetings.
- C. Suggest that advisers, in using any part of the outline at a group discussion, try to get the subject matter discussed by raising questions rather than by giving the factual data to the participants in advance. Only to the extent the group fails to bring out adequate discussion and answers should the leader help out with leading questions and suggestions. In this way, the participants themselves will do the thinking and thus will get much more out of the discussion than if they merely had the facts handed to them.

